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V. AFRICAN REACTION AGAINST ASSIMILATION

I admit that as Negro students in the years 1930–4 we were only an obstruction. I admit that we were racialist; we were intoxicated by the banner of Negritude. At that time no intercourse was possible with Europeans. But since then, because this racialism betrayed our African-Negro humanism, because it led to deadlock by imposing cold war between races and continents, between man and man, we decided upon reflection to make an extra effort. Today we have accomplished this—the results of European decolonisation have contributed to it—we have left behind us the period of denial to embark with you upon the period of construction.

LÉOPOLD SÉDAR SENGHOR

THE 1946 constitution as far as Senegal and the other more advanced territories of French Africa were concerned really fell between two stools. In so far as it was assimilationist, it was not sufficiently so. If France were ever to establish her Franco-African republic it had to be on the basis of the equality implicit in assimilation. And this equality was denied at many turns. In so far as it permitted decentralisation in the form of territorial and federal assemblies, it was to encourage the growth of nationalist and regional politics. In Senegal, where the changes made were of relatively little importance, the failure to put into practice a fully assimilationist policy was to be one of the predominant influences behind the reaction against assimilation that was the distinguishing feature of the next decade of Senegalese politics.

Overseas leaders had been particularly disillusioned with French honesty in the application of the Overseas Labour Code. This code was drawn up at the Brazzaville Conference and promised amongst other things equal pay for equal work,

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698 641 466 a forty hour week, a minimum wage, the development of trade unions and the institution of a labour inspectorate. However the second Constituent Assembly procrastinated in according these economic rights to its overseas citizens and was dissolved before it could bring them into force. It was only in 1952 that the overseas deputies were able to force this measure through.

698 665 One of the reasons for the break-up of the old *S.F.I.O.* in 1948, which may be taken as symbolic of the reaction against assimilation, was the attitude of the parent party in France to social legislation for the overseas territories. The *S.F.I.O.* had voted against equal pensions for African [641] and metropolitan French veterans; it had voted against the introduction of the French social security system for the overseas departments, and it had abstained on a motion to abolish the dual college system. But more important was the desire of the newly enfranchised 'bush' peasants for greater participation in the direction of party policy. Hitherto the party, closely linked with the parent body in France, had been tightly ruled by Lamine Guèye from Dakar. At the 1947 Congress of the party a group of members led by Senghor demanded a greater voice in party councils. The people of the bush, so long denied the rights accorded to the privileged of the *Quatre Communes*, once enfranchised showed their resentment against both those who exercised these rights and those who granted them. In the following year Senghor, backed not only by the intellectuals but by the vast majority of the bush, founded the *Bloc Democratique Sénégalais* (*B.D.S.*) declaring that 'Assimilation is an illusion in a world whose people have become aware of their own personality'. He attacked the *S.F.I.O.* for its close ties with France and its failure to take an independent line on African matters. So just as Lamine Guèye has been described as the representative [668] of the era of assimilation, so Senghor can be dubbed the representative of reaction to this policy.

698 668 This reaction was at first not part of a concerted

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movement, though by the late fifties it amounted to a definite revolt against the basic assumption of an assimilationist policy that there was nothing of worth in African culture and that the greatest benefit France could bring to Africans was to make them French. It was hardly surprising that those to whom this policy had been most heavily applied should be the first to react. Thus in political and cultural affairs the Senegalese were in the vanguard of the campaign for the recognition of the African personality, or in French African terms *la négritude*. This new movement showed itself in many fields. In politics it was to manifest itself in a rupture with the metropolitan French parties, and the assertion of the necessity of the incorporation of traditional African values into European-type political systems. On the human plane it insisted on the dignity of the African, the originality of his personality and his contribution to the achievement of the human race. In the cultural field it implied a return to the values of African art, which educated Africans until recently had themselves tended to reject. As regards history, it denied the common European allegation that Africans had no history and asserted that Africans had in fact made a far greater contribution to world history than was revealed in text books. Finally it was to produce a picture of a suffering Africa, exploited and abused by the white man, awakening slowly to a glorious day of freedom.

The policy of Senghor's new party, which was not allied to any metropolitan party, was characteristic of this revolt. Its declared aim was to promote a new form of African socialism, related to the realities of the African situation. Accordingly the party was to be organised to correspond with the socio-ethnic structure of the country. It demanded a greatly increased autonomy for Senegal and other African countries, and whilst not demanding independence, a word that did not touch the public lips of any major French African politician for another ten years, it advocated a federal relationship between France and her overseas territories.

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This move was the more surprising since Senghor was and is one of the most highly assimilated of French Africans. He was the first African to gain his *agrégation*. He was effectively the grammarian of the constitution of the Fourth Republic, and whenever there was a dispute as to the interpretation of the constitution in the National Assembly it was as often as not the second deputy of Senegal to whom the President of the Assembly referred for advice. As a member of a rich family of merchants from Joal, a town which though not privileged like the *Quatre Communes*, had long-standing connexions with Europe, he had been able to pursue his education in France and became a professor there. He was well known in literary circles as a writer and poet. Indeed as those who have wished to malign him have since asserted, he seemed almost more French than the French. But, and it is an important but, his return to his African past, his sudden resentment of his own Frenchness and his search for virtue in the African personality was the result of his sudden realisation of the extent of his assimilation by France, though he himself has said that he assimilated, and was not assimilated. Perhaps his dilemma is best illuminated by the experience of Aimé Césaire, the High Priest of *négritude*, who as Senghor is always the first to admit, was his real source of inspiration for this return to the past. The story goes that Césaire, a West Indian living for long in Paris, and already distinguished as a man of letters, was travelling in a train, when he found himself sitting next to a black marine. His first racial reaction was that of a white man. This horrified him so much that he returned to his native West Indies to 'rediscover' himself, and wrote a series of poems, that have become as it were the hymns of *négritude*. Senghor subsequently became the fulcrum of the new movement to assert the uniqueness and value of the Negro personality. Ulli Beier, reviewing Senghor's poetry, has written: 'Senghor is not merely a Frenchified African who tries to give exotic interest to his French poems; he is an African who uses the French language to express his African soul.'

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Those who have not come under the influence of a strong assimilation policy have never had to assert their essential *négritude*. Thus the English-speaking African, whose culture and traditional political organisation was largely left intact by the British administration, was rarely concerned about his identity as an African and until very recently this problem has been of little concern for the Nigerian or Ghanaian. It has never occurred to him to doubt his *négritude*. There are of course a number of examples of what may be called assertion of the African personality in the English-speaking territories, but the cult of *négritude* never caught on in them as it did in Senegal and the other French territories.

Thus it was that the very Africans who had achieved the greatest distinction within the French cultural framework were to be the first to champion a return to the African past in search of their own essential personality. Thus it was that for long Paris became the cultural capital of Africa, for there the books and magazines were published in which they could tell the public of their new ideas. Whilst in the late forties and early fifties the British West African *évolué* was more concerned with the achievement of political independence from Britain, the French African *évolué* was more concerned with his cultural emancipation. Senghor's formation of a new political party is more interesting for the emphasis it lays on its reassertion of African values than for any proposed political rupture with France.

The reaction against assimilation, as P. Mercier has pointed out in *Elites Sénégalaises*, came essentially from the new educated generation.

> It is the elite that has given expression to this desire for a return to the fountain head . . . From an acceptance of assimilation characteristic of the preceding generation opinion turned first to less sharply defined positions—typified by the slogan 'assimilate, don't be assimilated'—and then the attitudes of refusal, the details of which are still not very clear. Such attitudes accompany a lush ideological growth, to which only a very brief reference can be

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668 given here. They are not exempt from inconsistency, they are intertwined with each other. The only point at which all these ideologies concur is that they one and all are the expression of an intense reaction against colonialism—and obviously against the policy of assimilation—and serve as a basis for a growing nationalism.

The reaction against assimilation took the form of a denial of the basic assertion that Africans were a people without history or culture and that they were fortunate to have been taken under the guiding wing of France. The French administrator who declared 'We are the modern Romans. We have civilised these people, and built them roads', was the prime object of their attack. To counter this patronising French attitude Senegalese intellectuals looked into their past to discover an African civilisation which they could show had also played its part in the development of man. They rejected the common nineteenth-century European interpretation of African history which showed a people engaged in interminable internecine and debilitating warfare, who had not discovered the wheel, who lived under appalling conditions of disease and climate, and they substituted their own interpretation of Africa, which was closer to Jean-Jacques Rousseau's picture of the Noble Savage untainted by the evils of modern society. In a few cases they took the somewhat defeatist attitude of Césaire, shouting 'Hurrah for those who invented nothing'. But the more typical reinterpretation, was that of Cheikh Anta Diop, who gives an extreme idealisation of African history. His works—*L'Afrique noire pré-coloniale*, *Nations nègres et cultures* and *L'unité culturelle de l'Afrique noire*—have come under heavy criticism from European scholars. But a critical evaluation is not intended here. What is important is that a Senegalese, of undoubted scholastic attainment, had reinterpreted the history not only of his country but of the continent as a whole, so that it could be put on equal terms with that of Europe. Thus he asserts in *Apports et perspectives culturels de l'Afrique* (*Présence Africaine*) that

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Pharaonic Egypt was a Negro civilisation. Since the West acknowledges its debt to Egyptian civilisation, it was also indebted to Negro peoples for its present cultural attainments. '. . . the Egyptian achievement was essentially a Negro one and . . . all Africans without exception can draw from it the same moral benefits that the West does with regard to Graeco-Latin civilisation.' Elsewhere he asserts in *Nations nègres et culture* (1955), 'Intellectuals should study the past not merely for pleasure but to learn lessons from it.' A notable strand in Diop's return to the past is not merely to assert the traditional dignity of the Senegalese, but of all Africans, even though his work shows inevitably a pro-Senegalese bias when he states that the ancient Egyptians spoke a language that was basically Wolof.

The second major string in the bow of reaction to assimilation was the assertion of the original unity of Africans, a unity that had only been broken up by the colonialists. Diop's *L'unité culturelle de l'Afrique noire* is an attempt to prove the fundamental unity of black Africa, for obviously a united Africa would represent a more potent cultural force, and consequently political force, in the face of Europe than one divided into a host of petty states and tribes. Pan-Africanism, on the cultural level, was largely the work of such writers as Diop and Senghor. Its political aspects, not surprisingly, were to be taken up by the more politically conscious English-speaking Africans like Nnamdi Azikiwe and Kwame Nkrumah.

But the most important thesis of all was that of the African personality. And for this Senghor, now President of the Republic of Senegal, was largely responsible. It is all very well for a people to prove that they have a history when others say they have not. But the most important thing, as far as Senghor and other Senegalese intellectuals saw it, was to prove the uniqueness of the African contribution not only to the past but to the present. Thus Senghor asserted that the African had a certain outlook on life that others had not. The essence of the African

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668 personality, its uniqueness as Senghor saw it, is best understood from this quotation:

> That is to say that the Negro, traditionally, is not devoid of reason, as people would have me say. But his reason is not discursive, it is synthetic; it is not antagonistic but sympathetic. It has a different mode of perception. Negro reasoning does not detract from the things it contemplates, it does not mould them into two rigid schemes, thereby ignoring their very essence; it flows through the veins of things to arrive at the living heart of reality. The reasoning of the white man is analytical by utilisation, that of the Negro intuitive by participation.

Whether all the advocates of the African personality held so abstruse and philosophical a concept of its character is doubtful. But as the young poet Lamine Diakhite, a close disciple of Senghor, has written: 'Let us admit it, it is thanks to Senghor and Césaire that my generation became aware of itself, that it embarked upon the path of asserting its personality.'

[571] This movement, started in the late forties, was to touch mainly the intellectuals, those who had been most assimilated by the French. The poorer classes had of course not been so effectively alienated from their past. These intellectuals were during the next years to question everything in the light of this newly discovered or rediscovered African personality. Some advocated the shutting of the door against Europe and some of Cheikh Anta Diop's writings have elements of counter-racism. Whilst Europeans have been asserting their superiority over Africans for so long, he counters by asserting the Negro superiority over Europeans. Fortunately this negative attitude did not survive to any important degree.

There was also a healthy questioning of the values of European or Western culture, though this often went to the extremes of outright rejection. David Diop, the young [539] Senegalese poet who died recently in an air crash, accuses the white man's civilisation of hypocrisy:

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In the country where the houses touch the sky
but where the heart is not touched
In the country where the hand is placed on the Bible
but where the Bible remains closed.*

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The forum for this great re-examination of the African past was to be *Présence Africaine*, a bi-monthly review of Negro African culture, founded by a Senegalese called Alioune Diop in 1947 and open 'to all contributors of good-will (white, yellow or black), who might be able to help define African originality and to hasten its introduction into the modern world'. Although the review was Pan-Negro in outlook, its original inspiration came from a small group of Senegalese intellectuals in association with West Indians like Césaire and Haitians like Price-Mars. There was of course nothing parochial about this. It was only that the Senegalese were the first, for the reasons outlined above, to feel really strongly about the reassertion of African culture. And when in 1956 *Présence Africaine's* efforts culminated in the first Congress of Negro Writers and Artists, the Senegalese were to play a dominant role. In his opening speech to the conference Alioune Diop, the secretary and backbone of the organisation, made a moving protest against the myth of a people without culture, a protest that earned the support of all delegates. But his attacks on assimilation can have had relatively little meaning for delegates from the English-speaking territories; whilst some of the American Negro delegates like Richard Wright felt that as far as they were concerned it was impossible to return to a past from which they had been physically and culturally removed for over three centuries. Replying to a brilliant discourse by Senghor on 'The Laws of the Negro African Culture', he asked: 'I wonder where do I, an American Negro, conditioned by the harsh industrial, abstract force of the Western world that has used stern, political prejudices

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* Translated by Ulli Beier.

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668 against the society (which he has so brilliantly elucidated)—where do I stand in relation to that culture?'

Alioune Diop declared:

> Assimilation corresponds to a type of human relationship imposed by colonisation. It demands that the individual (for it affects only individuals) tear himself from his natural context and he who cannot assert his own personality must replace his habits of thinking, feeling and acting by others which he would only share with a foreign community.

By the time of this congress the Senegalese, as well as other Africans, had examined pretty thoroughly the whole question of French assimilation. For instance, A. Wade, a Senegalese, in a paper entitled 'Must Africa evolve a [671] positive law?', protested against the use in his country of a foreign legal system evolved in a different social context and which could not meet all the requirements of traditional society. He called for a new legal system which would be in effect a synthesis of African customary law and French law. In another article he called for a reform of teaching methods in Africa in the light of local conditions. There [571] were few stones this anti-assimilationist élite left unturned in their efforts to re-establish the values of the African past. They presented a dramatic contrast with the élite of the pre-war generation who, like the young men in Ousmane Socé Diop's *Karim*, so readily accepted the virtues of Western ways.

668 Amongst this group were a number who fell back not on
648 the values of the African past so much as Marxist theories in their attacks on colonialism and assimilationist policy. Principal amongst this group was Majhemout Diop, leader of the pro-Communist *Parti Africain de l'Indépendence*. [665] In issue No. 14 of *Présence Africaine* he attacked colonialism bitterly:

> There is no possible ambiguity; colonisation equals capitalistic enterprise. Any other explanation is invalid, is deceitful, a myth, a myth of civilisation and of co-operation.
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> A coloniser cannot be humanitarian . . . that would be the

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most irreducible of paradoxes. Colonisation is always measured in terms of gain for the coloniser.

Between colonialist and colonial there is room only for forced labour, intimidation, pressure, police, theft, rape, obligatory farming, scorn, mistrust, arrogance, self-conceit, deceit, suppressed élites and debased masses.

No human relationship but a relationship based on domination and submission which transform the coloniser into a pawn, an adjutant, a warder, a flogger and the native into an instrument of production.

The resentment of assimilation is the same. But the interpretation is a Marxist one and the remedies subsequently offered by Majhemout Diop were non-African in origin. His *Contribution to the Study of Political Problems in Black Africa* is almost entirely Marxist in inspiration and the source matter, abundantly evident from the footnotes, is the work of Stalin, Lenin, Engels and Marx, none of whom had any first-hand knowledge of economic conditions in Africa. Another Senegalese, of very distinguished academic reputation, who uses Marxist techniques in his studies of African problems, is Ly Abdoulaye, an economic historian who nevertheless is much more inclined to take into account African circumstances in the application of Marxist theories. Indeed Ly is at great pains to avoid Marxist terminology even when employing Marxist ideas. There are in fact few Senegalese intellectuals who are not in some sense Marxist socialists. But more especially they are devotees of what they call African socialism.

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In the search for identity that followed the application of assimilationist policy, the first tendency was to rehabilitate African culture. Naturally political rehabilitation was one of the most important goals for politicians like Senghor. But when he broke with the *S.F.I.O.* in 1948, he gave as one of his reasons that French socialism, like Communism, after all, 'did not understand our problems, and wanted to solve them with a plan devised by and for Europe'. His proposed alternative of 'African socialism' was at the time

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668 very ill-defined. But with the necessity of finding a new
[665] political system appropriate to the African situation there evolved, particularly in Senegal, a fairly coherent doctrine which will be examined in the final chapter.

In the early days a number of assertions were made about the political genius of the African, none of which can be attributed to any one man though as far as Senegal has been concerned Senghor has been the chief theoretician. Whilst appreciating and accepting many of Marx's theories as both politically and economically valid for Africa he believed that Marx would have revised his system in face of African realities as well as the scientific achievements of the twentieth century. He advocated the adoption of Marxism, shorn of its anti-religious doctrine and adapted to African needs. A cardinal point as far as Senghor was concerned, was that African society could not fit into the classical Marxist analysis. Instead he maintained modern African society
[565] had three classes: first the liberal professions and trades; second the salaried employees, civil servants and workers; third the vast peasant mass. Under the colonial regime the former two classes had been able to achieve incomes out of all proportion to the average peasant income of fourteen pounds a year. This peasant class is Marx's proletariat.

To support his policital views, Senghor advanced his theory that the 'Negro-African' was essentially different from the European. 'The African Negro does not distinguish the object nor does he analyse it—he takes it as it is between his hands, he feels it, touches it, smells it; thus the subject and the object are dialectically confronted in the very act of perception, and hence participation and communion.' Others, in their suggestions for a modern African political system showed how they could look to their own (somewhat idealised) African past for guidance. For instance there was no real need for opposition in the European sense. African politics in the village would supply the model. There everyone sat in the palaver house until all were agreed on the formula of action. Once discussed openly

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in this sense, it had to be agreed by everyone and the discussion would not end until agreement was reached. Thus in the modern African society there would be real justification for a one-party state, for in theory no one could be against the Government, since by adopting traditional African methods, all would be agreed to any given course of action. Furthermore Africans already had their own built-in socialism. In the village no one could go hungry. And by an elaborate set of social laws and customs he who had invariably ended by sharing his possessions with those who had not. Above all, Africans could bring to the world this harmony of traditional African society where agreement was reached by all on every political decision, and where a voluntary socialism was already practised—what Senghor described as 'la sagesse africaine'. If Africa had something to bring to the modern world, it was this special political experience.

Despite this intense reaction to France's assimilationist policy by the Senegalese élite, for long no one openly voiced the logical conclusion of such attacks—the demand for total independence. Up until 1958 the most extreme official demand was for a federal constitution in which the African territories could develop along their own lines and have equal political rights with France. But in France, African students were impatient of constitutional niceties which seemed to them to avoid the one and only issue—that of putting an end to colonialism. In 1952 *Présence Africaine* published a special supplement in which African students, mostly Senegalese, made themselves more than clear on this issue. And whilst it is true that students tend to be much more extreme in their political attitudes than those actually exercising power, amongst the writers in this special supplement were some who were to have considerable influence on the political situation in Senegal as representatives of the young anti-colonialist generation, such as Assane Seck and Majhemout Diop. The latter in his call for immediate, unequivocal and absolute independence was in fact not

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representative of the main stream of student feeling. Rather it was summed up by Kader Fall in his article 'The Problem of the Elite in Black Africa' in which he concluded: 'The African people, after centuries of colonisation, has a right to demand that its more intelligent members should participate at his side and together in the elaboration of a new world which will see the end of colonial servitude.'

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develop its own personality.' The *S.F.I.O.* parties of Africa met in Conakry to found a new socialist party entirely African in basis, called the *Mouvement Socialiste Africain.* Thus after over twenty years Lamine Guèye officially broke one of Senegal's closest links with France. At the same time Senghor called a congress of his allies in other territories from the *I.O.M.* and formed a federal party called the *Convention Africaine.* There were thus three new major African parties, with sections in most of the eight territories of West Africa and some in *A.E.F.*, each preaching African unity. But the federal executive, the very structure through which this could be maintained, was missing.

At the *loi cadre* elections that took place at the end of March 1957, the *R.D.A.*, the most thoroughly organised on the ground, proved the strongest party of the three and in West Africa and gained overwhelming majorities in Soudan, Guinea and Ivory Coast, dominated the coalition in Upper Volta and provided the opposition in Niger and Dahomey. But the party, as was soon proved at the long delayed Bamako Conference of September 1957, was far from united. Its main difference was over the problem of the federal executive. Its President, Félix Houphouët-Boigny of Ivory Coast had, as a Minister in the French Government, been one of the principal architects of the *loi cadre* and was opposed to the creation of a federal executive. The *R.D.A.*'s very dynamic Vice-President, Sékou Touré of Guinea, formed in the tough school of trade unionism, however championed the creation of a federal executive, and in this respect he was closer to Senghor than to his own party chief. At the Bamako Conference Sékou Touré persuaded the party to adopt it as a prime objective.

Meanwhile in Senegal, ever the source of new things, was born the first African party with the avowed object of independence, the *P.A.I.* (*Parti Africain de l'Indépendence*) led by Majhemout Diop, who had strong Communist sympathies. Till then the word independence had been

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studiously avoided not only by Senegalese but by nearly all leading French African politicians. The official formula was the creation of a Franco-African community, in which Africans would have fully autonomous states (or federations if Senghor and Sékou Touré had their way) and matters like defence and foreign affairs would be shared between France and the other member states. As far as the Senegalese were concerned their long attachment to France, despite their reaction against assimilationism, made it difficult to countenance the idea of complete separation. As Senghor always put it, 'fédérer n'est pas séparer.' Furthermore French aid to West Africa in general and Senegal in particular had been enormous.

The Senegalese thesis on federation made headway in the early months of 1958. After several meetings between the major African parties, the *Convention Africain* and the *M.S.A.* met in Dakar in March and formed the new *Parti du Regroupement Africain*, with the aim of obtaining Federations of French West and French Equatorial Africa, which in turn would be federated with France in the proposed Franco-African community. On 5 April 1958 the *P.R.A.* members of the *Grand Conseil*, plus the *R.D.A.* members, voted in favour of the creation of a federal executive; the only Ivory Coast delegate abstained.

Despite bitterness over the question of the federal executive, there was still little open talk about independence except by the *P.A.I.* and this despite the example of Ghana. This situation was to be abruptly changed by the *putsch* of the military in Algiers on 13 May.

In presenting his new constitution for the Fifth Republic to the French people, de Gaulle made it a straight choice of Yes or No. As far as the French were concerned this was a reasonable choice. Acceptance or rejection. Once rejected, there was the possibility of trying again as they had done in 1946. But as far as the overseas territories were concerned, they were given no alternative. They either accepted the constitution, whose details we shall examine

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shortly, or rejected it and took what de Gaulle described as independence with all its consequences. Under the constitution France and her overseas territories were to form a Franco-African Community in which each territory would become an autonomous republic, but would pool certain matters such as defence, foreign affairs, currency and higher education in the Executive Council of the Community. Thus once again we have the traditional French dilemma over assimilation, this time in its most acute form. Once again we have the paradox of an authoritarian regime introducing liberal reforms. On the one hand de Gaulle's Franco-African Community satisfied assimilationist theory by creating a supreme institution, the Senate of the Community, and a supreme executive, the Council of the Community, in which France and Africa would participate on roughly equal terms, whilst on the other hand he conceded a great degree of autonomy to all the overseas territories. Furthermore de Gaulle offered, albeit with little grace, independence to any territory that cared to take it—an offer that had hitherto never been considered by French politicians. This actually tied in with a growing resentment in France against the cost of the colonies. From 1946-1958 France had spent in the form of aids and subsidies over £400 million in French West Africa alone. Much of this money was spent on lavish schemes often of dubious economic worth. In France many people, particularly after a series of articles in *Paris-Match* by Raymond Cartier, began to question the worth of colonies which cost so much and whose leaders seemed to them so ungrateful for all they received. This attitude received the nickname of *Cartierisme*.

Judging by earlier statements of both Senegalese and other African politicians the *loi cadre* might well seem to have been a liberal solution to the problem of small poor countries economically and culturally linked to France. But already Ghana had gained her independence, and Nigeria was scheduled for it in 1960. In Senegal resentment against the nature of the *loi cadre* and the large number of students

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returning from France imbued with anti-colonialist ideas made the issue of independence a burning one. Yet the difficulty of making a complete break with her cultural parents was made clear by Joseph Ma Thiam, a member of F.E.A.N.F. (Federation of Students from French Black Africa) who wrote: 'We are not anti-French, that would be ridiculous and impossible. We are simply Africans and we want not minor reforms, called *loi-cadre* or Community, but a revolution of which the necessary outcome will be independence, as this is conceived of and put into practice in the twentieth century.'

For the Senegalese leaders, as indeed for other African leaders, the choice was a difficult one. The idea of sudden rupture with France, which de Gaulle's choice implied, was not only economically terrifying, but rather like the impending break-up of a family. So many of the leaders had lived so much of their lives in Paris that the prospect of such imminent separation was difficult to contemplate. It is against this background that the conference of the *P.R.A.* at Cotonou from 25-27 July 1958 must be seen. Here delegates met to consider the situation created by the projected new constitution. At that stage the terms of the constitution were not clearly known, though it was general knowledge that they would not be favourable to the idea of total independence. At the conference delegates were carried away by demands for independence and voted for 'Immediate independence; the creation of a solid and progressive African Community; and negotiation with France for the creation of a multi-national confederation of free and equal peoples.' The last two items were in accord with current Senegalese feeling that federation was the only way to secure equality of the African personality in a Franco-African Community. But the morrow of the conference saw a number of delegates reflecting on the demand for immediate independence. The rupture seemed too abrupt and, as Mamadou Dia pointed out, they did not even know the terms of the new constitution. He expressed doubts on

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the ability of Senegal to accede immediately to independence. In certain territories, particularly in Senegal and Dahomey, pressure was brought to bear by France on the delegates against taking so drastic a step, so that the *P.R.A.* withdrew from its earlier stand and said that effectively the decision over the constitution would be left to each territorial section. In August the burning question for both the *P.R.A.* and *R.D.A.* was answered by General de Gaulle on his tour of Africa prior to the referendum in September. The right of independence would be inscribed in the constitution. But, he later added ominously, those who voted No to his constitution now would take all the consequences. For all states so economically dependent on France this was a considerable threat. Thus few leaders did in fact campaign against the constitution. In Guinea, Sékou Touré with a superb party organisation, managed to obtain a 97 per cent vote against the constitution and took independence with all its consequences, which involved the French destroying all their files and even taking away the telephones! In Niger the Premier, Djibo Bakary failed to carry his campaign against the constitution, and was forced reluctantly to resign, and after the subsequent election which was won by his *R.D.A.* opponents, to flee the country. In this matter it was said, the French who suspected Djibo Bakary of extreme left-wing sympathies were determined not to have 'a hole in the desert'.

In Senegal the situation was confused. Not until the last minute did the *P.R.A.* come out definitely in favour of the constitution. De Gaulle received a hostile reception on his visit to Dakar. Three radical members of the *P.R.A.* Ly Abdoulaye, Assane Seck and Amadou M. M'Bow declared they would vote No, whatever the rest of the Party decided. On 11 December the *P.R.A.* section of the Senegal party decided to vote Yes. The three members who had declared they would vote No resigned, formed a new party confusingly called *P.R.A.-Sénégal* and joined with the *P.A.I.* and campaigned against de Gaulle. Once the decision of the

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648 668 [665] majority party had been made, however, there was little doubt as to the outcome of the Referendum. But the seeds of independence had been sown.

Almost immediately after the Referendum the planners got down to work seeking to create the federal executive that had escaped them under the *ancien régime*. Guinea meanwhile had become independent and there was a certain satisfaction amongst those who voted Yes at the difficulties so abrupt a break with France entailed. Alas, as was later realised, Guinea independent and the rest still within the Community, meant the first crack in the old federation. On 29 December delegates from Senegal, Soudan, Upper Volta and Dahomey, together with observers from Mauretania, met to consider the possibility of creating a new federation.

On 17 January 1959 a federal constitution was promulgated with the accord of all four governmental delegations, and the new Mali came into being. However pressures from France and from Houphouët-Boigny, who still bitterly opposed any form of federation, soon forced Upper Volta and Dahomey to withdraw, reducing Mali to two member states: Senegal and Soudan.

648 665 The new federation was short lived. In Soudan there had been almost unanimous support for the federation, but in Senegal a number of religious chiefs, in association with Ibrahim Seydou N'Daw, formerly President of the Senegalese Assembly, and an important member of the governing *U.P.S.* party, formed the Senegalese Solidarity Party and together with the two left-wing parties, the *Parti Africain de l'Indépendence* and the *P.R.A.*—Senegal campaigned [666] against the proposed federation. At the polls the Government won a resounding victory.

Thus in both Senegal and Soudan the leaders who had chosen the path of federation won triumphant approval, though as Mamadou Dia admits somewhat ruefully, the people followed their leaders blindly on this question. It is essential here to note that the two countries were

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IX. THE FUTURE

We must really decolonise ourselves down to our innermost hearts and not merely at the level of appearances. Independence is a period of dismantling and creating. It is a 'creative destruction', to use the phrase of a well-known economist.

MAMADOU DIA

IN many independent African countries today it is difficult to elicit from politicians exactly what economic, social and political policy they propose to follow. Quite naturally, they talk in terms of achieving the maximum good for their people: but as often as not they have not worked out the priorities of industrialisation as against agriculture, health against education, roads against railways. Many describe their economic policies as socialist, a term which on investigation turns out to embrace advanced welfare state projects as well as questionable capitalist enterprises. In Senegal, however, the student is fortunate in having two leaders—President Senghor and Prime Minister Mamadou Dia—who have given not only considerable thought to the future economic and political structure of their country but have also put their ideas down on paper. Senghor has been the political theoretician of Senegal, Mamadou Dia its economist.

Both philosopher and economist show in their theories an intense desire to find 'African' solutions to their problems, and yet to incorporate the best the Western world has taught them. Senghor talks of the symbiosis of two cultures to both of which, as a Senegalese who has experienced France's assimilationist policy, he feels legitimately heir. Both have as their goal the creation of an African socialist state, but one that shall not stand in isolation from France and the Western world. All they ask is that the technical and political experience of the West should be adapted to the African

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668 context. Whilst accepting many of Marx's theories, Senghor feels that socialism must be adapted to African realities, of which Marx, writing in the nineteenth century, was quite unaware. Also he refuses, not only as an African but as a Catholic, to accept Marxist atheism. Senegal must above all be an African state, but he is opposed to what he calls the fashionable habit of rejecting Europe of whatever political shade. 'We shall continue to borrow from Europe the weapons of our liberation', he writes, 'above all socialism'. Once again it will be socialism in principle, adapted to the particular circumstances of Senegal and incorporating the keen African sense of community responsibility as well as European socialist experience in dealing with the problems of an advanced agricultural and industrial society.

Internally it is his aim to make of Senegal a model socialist state without disrupting the existing economy or social structure too violently. But his goal is a greater one: that is that Senegal, and indeed Africa, should make a major contribution to what he describes as the *Civilisation de l'universel*. It will be possible and proper for Senegal to absorb influences from outside provided they contribute towards this goal. It is his aim to achieve harmony between all races and ethnic groups in Senegal, to show that Africans, despite their bitter experiences in the past, harbour no bitterness towards their fellow men. And on the African plane, despite the unfortunate outcome of the Mali Federation, he is still a fervent believer in the ultimate goal of African unity, though much less enthusiastic about the federal form of government. The failure of the Mali Federation is taken not as a disaster for its eventual achievement but as an object lesson about the obstacles that can present themselves.

Senegal then is to be a model socialist state, aiming not only at internal harmony, but at the greater harmony of Africa and the world. Mamadou Dia has described this role succinctly in *Nations africaines et solidarité mondiale*:

> That is why the African nations who tomorrow will be called

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upon to play a historic role will be neither Negro, Berber, nor Arab nations, nor Christian, Muslim, nor animist nations. They will surely be strongly marked by the influence of different biological factors, and by the influence of different philosophies of their environment; but they will be nothing if not a synthesis, if not a civilisation. It is under this condition that they will be truly active element in the post-Marxian revolution of the twentieth century.

Reading the political philosophy of both Senghor and Mamadou Dia, one is tempted to say this humanism is all very admirable but what have such high-flown ideas got to do with a nation of three million poor people still living barely above subsistence level and of whom the majority of adults are still illiterate? Indeed, Senghor the philosopher and poet comes in for criticism by some students of African politics for his advocacy of this cultural cross breeding, for his apparent excessive attachment to the West. Will not, they ask, someone more African, more a politician and less a poet, be more typical of the African politicians of the future? This is perhaps not only to misunderstand Senghor, but also the Senegalese. Senghor may seem to live in the clouds, uttering fine phrases in enviable French, but the last fifteen years have shown him as a masterly political tactician. He broke away from Lamine Guèye and the *S.F.I.O.* to form his own party at just the right psychological moment. And when he felt an end had to be brought to the Mali Federation he accomplished it without shedding one drop of blood, to the surprise not only of foreign observers but particularly of his Soudanese partners. Today opposition to Senghor comes mainly from fellow intellectuals, whilst his standing with the people of the countryside remains high. His opposition is no less inclined to lengthy discourses on the philosophical foundations of the state. Ly Abdoulaye and Assane Seck of the *P.R.A.* are both of the University of Dakar; Majhemout Diop of the *P.A.I.* is a doctrinaire Communist; and Cheikh Anta Diop, as we have seen, has spent most of his Time on the rehabilitation of African history.

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spent most of his time on the rehabilitation of African history.

631 Of course there would be considerable justification for such criticisms if Senghor and his Government were not in fact getting down to the fundamental reorganisation of Senegal. Already since the days of the French, the whole country has undergone a complete administrative transformation. Before independence the country was divided into *cercles* and *subdivisions*, under French and occasionally African administrators, and *cantons*, run by traditional chiefs as agents of the administration. This structure has been completely changed to give the administration and therefore the Government closer contact with the people. Previously the traditional chief, albeit an agent of the administration, was interposed between the administrator and his people. Now that the *chef de canton* has been eliminated and the *canton* has been redesignated as an *arrondissement*, presided over by an administrative official, working under the *commandant de cercle*, the Government has rid the country of what the Minister of Interior, Valdiodio N'Diaye, has described as an anachronistic institution. The *cercles* [635] are grouped into seven regions, each with its Governor and regional assembly, which deliberates on the regional budget. These seven regions have been laid out so as to correspond with the major economic zones of the country, making concessions only to ethnic factors and problems of communications. The whole field administration outside headquarters has been completely Africanised since July [563] 1960, though there are many Europeans serving as 'technical advisers' in the Government in Dakar.

668 But most important of all is the proposed four-year development plan for the Senegal which envisages a major revolution in the education, health and economy of the country. This plan was drawn up after nearly eighteen months of intensive research in Senegal by the Révérend Père Lebret, and his team of European and African researchers. The whole plan was directed by Mamadou Dia,

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whose economic ideas are well known from various books he has written, more especially his *Nations africaines et solidarité mondiale* and *Réflexions sur l'économie de l'Afrique noire*. Dia is essentially a socialist, who believes however that European socialism could never really identify itself with Africa, because, as he points out, so much of the improvement in the living conditions of European workers was founded on the economic expansion resulting from nineteenth and twentieth-century colonialism. And he remarks bitterly that even today one sixth of the world's population, mainly white, enjoys 80 per cent of the world's income. He feels that political liberation is nothing without economic liberation and that this is the great challenge to the young states of Africa. He does not believe in any tailor-made answer to this challenge, whether it be Communist or Western in origin. The Senegalese answer must be based on Senegalese realities, taking into account the experience of other underdeveloped countries, in which he is well versed.

This explains the eighteen-month long 'inventory' made by Father Lebret and his team of every aspect of Senegalese life. Dia sees one of the greatest dangers of Africa in its present economic balkanisation, dangers which provide economic backing to political demands for African unity. Dakar's many industries were of course planned to serve the former French West Africa and are now at the mercy of the individual economic policies of its seven French-speaking neighbours. Such a situation will make it impossible for large scale and rational economic development. Nor does he see in industrialisation the solution to all the country's problems. Indeed the basic problem is the raising of the general standard of living of the country, particularly of those areas that lag behind the rest. Above all he is not going to follow slavishly the ideas of the West or the East. Senegal's development is to be undertaken in the light of Senegal's own problems

This then is the background to the impressive and far

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433 668 reaching economic development plan. Mamadou Dia has described the plan as the 'décollage' or taking-off point of the country's development. The plan is the expression of the African socialism of which Senghor and Dia have so long dreamed. It has two important points. Relatively little emphasis is placed on industrialisation, and fundamental to the development of the country are [474] 'rural animation' and co-operatives through which the people will be made aware of the great future that could be theirs if only they co-operate in the realisation of this plan. Already 80 per cent of peasant farmers are organised in co-operatives.

Senegal's economy is based today on the export of its ground-nut crop of just under 800,000 tons a year. This has been produced to the detriment of subsistence crops, with the absurd result that Senegal, a basically agricultural country, is importing foodstuffs to the tune of £15 million a year. Furthermore there has been a great disparity in the economic and social development of the towns in com- [369] parison with the bush. Thus whilst Dakar is one of the most modern and prosperous towns in West Africa, the Vallée du Fleuve is abysmally poor and Casamance hitherto neglected. Thus the emphasis is on rural development; the [871] extension of educational facilities to a population only 30 per cent of whose children go to school; then the increase in medical facilities; the supply of water to villages without it; and in particular the opening-up of hitherto neglected regions by improved communications, which includes the [491] tarring of over 1,000 miles of roads and improvement of 600 miles of dirt road. But above all the emphasis is on the increase of home food crops and the widening of the variety of foodstuffs available to the peasants. It is estimated that if the plan works out, then the global index of production, taken as 100 in 1959, will be up to 137 in 1964. New industries such as the phosphate works at Taiba, an oil refinery, chemical factories and textile printing works will provide 10,000 new jobs, and thus absorb some of the unemployed

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school leavers who characterise every West African town from Dakar to Douala, and whose numbers will increase in future under the new plan, since by 1964-65 it is hoped over 50 per cent of children of school age will be at primary school.

The whole plan is to cost £135 million, much of the money to be drawn from abroad, and much from private sources. As can be seen from the table below the emphasis is on social improvement rather than the creation of great gesture industries.

	Percentages	
	Of public investments	*Of total investments*
Infrastructure	33·9	18·75
Agriculture	18·0	13·4
Commerce and Industry ..	7·0	44·4
Education	12·2	6·7
Health	5·3	2·9
Housing	7·2	10·9
Administrative	5·5	3·0

It is a socialist plan at heart. The state will be taking over large sectors of the economy. Already the state trading organisation for the marketing of ground-nuts with the aid of local co-operatives has taken over the marketing of over a quarter of the crop from private commerce. But it is doing this in direct competition with them, to ensure that the organisation is commercially viable. Senghor believes 'Where private capitalism comes into peaceful competition with socialism, the latter must, I feel sure, emerge triumphant . . .'

On the other hand Senegal is not trying to discourage private enterprise, for, as can be seen from the above table, it accounts for much of the capital for the plan. Indeed, particularly favourable concessions are made to it. What

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433 668 [491] the Government is trying to do is take out of its hands the control of the basic economy, such as the ground-nut crop, and to ensure that the maximum benefit accrues to Senegal from overseas investment.

The distinguishing feature of the plan is its reliance not on *investissement humain* on Chinese lines, a method which tends to be favoured by the Guinea and Mali Governments, but on *animation rural*. It is believed that compulsory forced [466] labour is not satisfactory to the people who are undertaking it, even if it is ostensibly in their own interests, first because it is compulsory, and secondly because it can suffer from excessive planning by the centre, so that the people may be 'investing' their labour in things which in the first place they do not want, and which in the second place fail, as certain agricultural schemes have done in Russia and China, as a result of overcentralised planning.

433 668 659 Basically *animation* is what we would call 'community development', but it is to be operated in the context of the general plan for the Senegal, touching on education and medical services as well as economic development. The idea is that people in villages should be asked what they want: a new road; a new dispensary etc. It will then be explained to them that such things have not been achieved up till now through lack of funds but that the Government is prepared to put its services at the disposal of the villagers to build a road or some such if the villagers are prepared to provide labour. The object then is to find out what villag- [496] ers really want and to stimulate them into wanting them enough to supply labour for them. In any chosen area, then, a member of the Ministry of Planning and Development (Animation Section) will go into the village and enlist the people's co-operation in selecting an intelligent man who is sufficiently respected both by the traditionalists and by the youth to be able to put over these new ideas of community development. He is then sent on an 'animation course' where he is taught improved farming and other methods and is (it is hoped) inspired with the need for

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progress. This he then transmits to the village, and in Casamance *animation* has worked to the extent of building a thirty-five kilometre road which cut the journey between two important villages by nearly fifty kilometres. In the Vallée du Fleuve, people who never grew rice before have now quadrupled their incomes by producing rice under a rural animation scheme.

All this President Dia hopes will raise the standard of living of each man by 3.5 per cent each year, doubling it by the fourth four year plan in 1975.

The plan is an ambitious one, an attempt to create a new Senegal synthesising the best of Africa and Europe. If it works, and the political future of both Senghor and Dia may well depend on this, then Senegal may become a pilot nation for Africa both economically and culturally. Senegal will then be in a sense a justification for the French assimilation policy, for although it failed in its attempts to assimilate the Senegalese both culturally and politically it has left profound marks on Senegalese society. And even if the experience of assimilation in Senegal has demonstrated the immense difficulties not only of one group trying to assimilate the other to its own standards, but of even getting the assimilating group to accept the other group as political and cultural equals, the end result may be the production of an African society which, whilst maintaining its own national identity, may prove a bridge between Africa and Europe and their two cultures.

6: Mercier E-5 (no date) 1956 MS37 Senegal MS37

[571] [178] preserve much of their prestige;[1] they are sometimes in diametrical opposition to the modernist elites and sometimes try to come to terms with them; occasionally, as the result of historical conditions, the two elites are closely interlocked.[2]

4. Types and degree of tension between the African modernist elites and the European groups. The latter occupy the position of ruling class in the whole community represented by each territorial unit. The conflict is fundamental, yet a balance, however temporary and precarious, between the two groups may sometimes be discerned, though it varies enormously in degree from one region to another and at different times.[3]

The situation in Senegal, compared with that in other parts of French West Africa, exhibits certain special features. Senegal was the first of these territories to be colonized.[4] At the beginning of the new phase which opened after the war, it had the largest number of educated and partly Westernized persons, and it has for several decades had a political life modelled on the West, though of a summary and limited character.[5] At this level of political life, the course of events during the past 10 years affords us a first glimpse of regional divergencies. [668] It is a significant fact that Senegal was not the first French West African territory in which a movement making political demands of some magnitude arose. The acute crises of the immediate post-war period developed elsewhere—in the Ivory Coast—with the founding and expansion of the Rassemblement Démocratique Africain, [665] the first political party in French Africa (Black) with nationalistic tendencies. The Rassemblement Démocratique Africain never succeeded in establishing itself firmly in Senegal, either before or after its change of policy in the 1950's.[6] There is no space here to describe in detail the historical and social background of such events, though I shall have to refer to it several times later in this paper. Some of the basic traits will suffice for mention: aspects of the traditional structures, of contemporary economic development, of the schools' endeavour to promote assimilation.

[563] The principal racial groups inhabiting Senegal,[7] whatever their cultural differences, and whatever their traditional hostility to one another (which has still by no means completely disappeared) all had the same type of social and political organization. They were strictly graded societies divided into endogamous castes, each with its special economic, political, ritual and other functions. In the present context, inter-caste antagonisms and incompatibilities are as a rule more important than racial antagonisms, since several racial groups may have equivalent social gradings or one may have borrowed and adapted another's gradings. This is a fundamental feature; it indicates the framework within which we can explain the problem of relations between [554] the traditional and the modernist elites. For instance, prestige due to education may be superimposed on prestige based on tradition, in particular prestige due to caste; or else the two may be completely separate.[8] Even today a high

1. Either officially or more or less 'clandestinely'.
2. E.g. in South Dahomey.
3. In the Ivory Coast, for example, a period of calm and co-operation followed when the Rassemblement Démocratique Africain dropped certain extreme claims.
4. Trade counters have existed for more than three centuries and the more specifically colonial period began more than a hundred years ago.
5. It had four municipalities with full privileges which sent a deputy to the French Parliament.
6. It broke off its alliance with the French Communist party.
7. The Ouolof, the Tukuleur and the Serer.
8. The resistance of the traditional ruling strata to foreign influence explains why, in certain cases, the lower castes were the first to go to school.

6:Mercier E-5 (no date) 1956 MS37 Senegal MS37

only a limited, and very indirect, part. Between this group and the working-class elite certain persisting tensions can be descried; a survey among the younger members—students, young workers—has brought to light more or less radical divergencies. However, the new elite is trying to extend its activity to the trade union sphere. A confederation of African workers independent of the organizations in metropolitan France has recently been founded, in which the young intellectual elite will apparently be extremely influential. This would be the counterpart of its entry into organized political action. In another domain, significant changes are occurring: the 'cultural associations' have a much more important role than their name would imply.[1] These are made up of the intellectual elite (in the widest sense in which I have used this term), which seeks by these means to avoid being relegated to a position of isolation, to acquire greater influence in the education of the people—e.g. through theatrical representations in one of the local languages—and to rediscover the highways of traditional African culture.

It is the new elite that has given expression to this desire for a 'return to the fountain-head'. A reaction, against assimilationist policies has appeared. From the acceptance of assimilation characteristic of he preceding generation opinion turned first to less sharply defined positions—typified by the slogan 'assimilate, don't be assimilated'—and then to attitudes of refusal, the details of which are still not very clear. Such attitudes accompany a lush ideological growth, to which only a very brief reference can be given here. It is not exempt from inconsistency; it is intertwined with growths of very different origin, sometimes hostile to each other. The only point at which all these ideologies concur is that they one and all are the expression of an intense reaction against colonialism—and obviously against the policy of assimilation—and serve as a basis for a growing 'nationalism'.[2] I will mention only the following points: the revival of African cultures and the affirmation of the common elements in a pan-African or, more generally, a Negro culture; the development of a veritable mythology around the notion of 'Negrohood'[3] and of a sort of 'counter-racism', the end-result of which is to shut the door on the outside world—i.e. primarily the Western world; the reinterpretation of history through a reversal of the perspective, a method applied not only to the history of the slave trade and the colonial period, but to the whole history of Africa as well;[4] the forging from Marxist theories of an ideological battering ram, to be used in a specifically African anti-colonial drive. The results of all these efforts make rapid headway throughout the 'educated' classes.[5]

The above picture is unavoidably only an incomplete outline. I have merely sought to bring out the importance of the present transitional phase and its characteristic processes. A new intellectual elite is taking up the torch from the 'colonial elite' which in Senegal had already succeeded in gaining appreciably greater influence than in the other French West African territories; there has been no break between them. And yet tensions and possibilities of conflict exist. Nevertheless, the conscious search for points of contact with

1. The study of political problems is a particularly important part of their activity.
2. In the African context, this term is used very broadly, to cover all anti-colonial movements.
3. The review *Présence Africaine* offers many examples of articles showing the influence of this idea.
4. The recent book by Cheikh Anta Diop, *Nations Nègres et Culture* (Negro nations and culture), Paris, 1955, is a highly significant example of what is being done on these lines.
5. These are still mere trends, but they indicate a change of outlook which will probably become deeper with time.

7:Crowder J-5 (1955-1958) 1959
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536 theatre. But the writing was powerful and distinguished. My most vivid memory of Ka at that time was an ear-shattering torrent of abuse directed at his leading lady: 'Pas de Fred Astaire ici. Çe n'est pas le Music Hall.'

Today that play is a thing of the past, which nevertheless brought him fame. Now he is engrossed in a piece about a young schoolteacher who is sent to a pagan animist village in the south of the Senegal, to found its first school. The play centres on the conflict between the educated teacher and the local witchdoctor who opposes the school. Deep in Ka's intellect is a striking preoccupation with the conflict of occidental reason with the seemingly irrational metaphysics of the forest and the bush.

Ka was seized by numerous other friends so we agreed to meet the following day at a café in the Avenue William Ponty, Dakar's main thoroughfare.

[547] The small café was crowded. Across the street the Café de Paris with its large, bad painting of Montmartre, was half empty and its clientele, sitting at the iron street tables, stared at us with vague interest. Ka was talking animatedly about nineteenth-century Russian novelists and the decline of Russian literature today. He was very typically '*rive gauche*' and indeed we might well have been in St. Germain des Prés.

'Of course, I think that Huxley is more essentially English than Graham Greene,' my companion continued in a new vein.

Later I went with Ka to his room in a small, dingy hotel in the back streets of Dakar. 'I prefer living here, away from my relations. At least one is free.' I wondered whether it wasn't because it reminded him of his life in Paris.

Together we read his latest play about Chaka, in which he treats the great Zulu as a narcissist. Once again I was struck by the power of his writing, the economy of his style. We fingered through copies of *Présence Africaine*, *Traits d'Union* and *Afrique* [804] *en Marche* where he and his fellow intellectuals have their works published.

668 Most striking of all is the cultural revolution, so marked in
571 Dakar, but gaining momentum from all parts of the French West African Federation. Ka Abdou Anta is a part of this revolution, which has produced a generation, albeit small, of intellectuals who can vie on equal terms with their counterparts in Europe.

7:Crowder J-5 (1955-1958) 1959
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Their grounding in French culture is superb. It is evident in their writing and in the exacting logic of their minds which sometimes, as so often with the French, can lead them to points of profound illogicality. We have nothing comparable in British West Africa. The creative output of these French Africans, good or bad, literary or scientific, is immense, especially if one considers that the whole of French West Africa has a population just equal to that of Northern Nigeria. Some of their leaders, like Léopold Sédar Senghor, stand on intellectual pedestals in France at the foot of which even Jean Paul Sartre sometimes worships. The reasons for this aspect of the revolution are not altogether difficult to discover. The French have, as opposed to the British, always been assimilationists. 'La France entend conduire les peuples dont elle a la charge.' French culture was fed to these young men and their success today is a tribute to the success of the French 'civilizing mission'. The other important factor is that French intellectuals have on the whole been negrophiles, and African art and culture has long enjoyed a vogue in France.

Today French Africans have a striking confidence in their intellectual prowess that one rarely remarks in the British West African equivalent. They know French culture like Frenchmen, but, in the words of M. Alioune Diop, the editor of *Présence Africaine*, 'It is necessary that we black men affirm that we alone can interpret our own culture.' And this interpretation seems largely to involve a return to the past such as Cheick Anta Diop, a much respected Senegalese writer, has advocated. In a sense Ka is involved in this return, this new movement. For him and his fellows the burning question becomes: Will this new generation of intellects ever derive anything from such a return? Or indeed are they in any better position to grasp the essentials of their traditional culture than the French negrophiles who first made them aware of the values of their own art.

An African professor at the University of Dakar, Monsieur Alassane N'Daw, remarked in an article 'Un Africain devant la Culture Française' published in the journal *L'Education Africaine*, that when he held a discussion with his philosophy class on Malraux's views on Negro art there was 'no enthusiasm, nor even any particular interest, but rather general scepticism'. One of his pupils confessed that when he visited the museum at Abomey in

7:Crowder J-5 (1955-1958) 1959
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668 Dahomey he experienced no aesthetic pleasure from Negro art, but was rather struck by its crudities. Indeed Professor N'Daw had difficulty in explaining to his students that European enthusiasm for African art was serious.

[571] Earlier in his article he points out the difficulty of the African intellectual who is torn between two cultures: the call of the past demanding fidelity to Africa, and the fascination of Western culture in which he has been educated and one of whose languages he uses to express himself. He is usually much more strongly drawn towards the latter.

In essentials these intellectuals are Frenchmen. They are living in a modern, occidentalized world far apart from the tribal, agricultural society that produced this art. Can they go back and at the same time go forward? Is there anything in the past that is appropriate to the new Africa they are trying to construct? This is their dilemma.

In Dakar the revolution is almost complete. What matters for these Africans are the years of reconstruction that lie ahead. Perhaps this vigorous young generation of intellectuals would do well to look to a better future than to a past from which they are almost totally divorced.

8: Mercier E-5 (ca. 1955) 1960 MS37 Senegal MS37

[P. 3A]
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Political Life in the Urban Centers of Senegal: A Study of a Period of Transition

Senegal and Sudan presently comprise the Mali Federation, which is in the process of achieving sovereignty within the French Community. Senegal itself is one of the most urbanized West African regions, and its cities have been characterized by a gradual growth of modern political life. The author presents some major findings on its urban political activity, based on extensive interviews made in the mid-1950's. The oldest urban elite, almost entirely assimilated into the French way of life, has been only partially successful in developing party organizations that satisfy the interests of the newer urban residents. As a consequence, the most active and radical post-war political activity has been centered in "non-political" bodies, notably labor unions. Also, urban political activity has been increasingly challenged by rural political developments, which have drawn their framework from urban politics. African specialists will note that Senegalese political development has much in common with such development elsewhere in Africa; it also has a number of distinctive features.

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The New Political Life

369 More importantly, the urban centers
668 deserve attention because of the role they have played in the development of a radically new type of political life, one
[177] whose forms have been largely borrowed from outside Africa. The first attempts at political organization and activity were born in the cities. More recently some political movements have appeared in a rural context, as a reflection of rural conditions, but they have drawn much of their pattern from the cities, or from among elements subject to urban influences.

The modern African city presents a set of conditions favorable to the development of especially intense political reac-
369 tions. The position of the colonizing power is most sharply apparent in the city, and the instruments of its power are concentrated there. The rootless condition of the African population seems at its extreme; the masses that gather in the city are unsettled, poorly established in their occupations, and suffer from
[571] every form of insecurity. The new elites created and shaped by urban life feel restricted and disappointed in their desires for social advancement and for a share in authority and in modern symbols of prestige.[5] Finally, the city brings to-
[563] gether a white society and a Negro society, though often clearly separated by topography. In these circumstances racial tensions can develop to their maximum. Moreover, they assume varied aspects, *e.g.*, competitive situations in various spheres, official or unofficial discrimination.[6] Intense reactions to such conditions may take no organized form and may not manifest themselves except after some delay, however. Here the

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369 problem of the "old cities" is again relevant. In them, such reactions can remain unorganized or marginal longer in relation to the official forms of political expression. We shall see that this is typical of certain Senegalese cities.

•668 Furthermore, some reactions are born and expressed in a much larger framework than that of political life in its strictest sense of party activity. Demands for justice in the colonial situation can be expressed on different planes and in different fields. In South Africa, for example, Africans are largely barred from social and political action, and the chief demands emerge in religious activities.[7] Elsewhere, political life may not be forbidden, but its forms of expression are limited, either openly or in fact—for instance, by means of a judicial system in which people cannot file a case. Thus, the [467] most radical demands are formulated not within the framework of parties — at least, in their official platforms — but in that of unions or other associations. Attitudes, behaviors, and ideologies are formed in such organizations, pending the possibility of full expression at the political level. In the urban centers of Senegal some of the most important popular forces, at least prior to the great transformations that began in 1956, were to be found outside parties.

The Growth of Rural Political Life

369 668 These fundamental demands of the urban population provide models for similar demands that spread from the cities into rural districts. The general preponderance of the cities in political initiative is mentioned above. They are both centers of attraction and centers for the diffusion of foreign influences. An im-

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portant part of the urban population has considerable mobility, and thus maintains solid ties and frequent communication with the regions of its origins.[8] Moreover, lesser members of the modern urban [571] elites, *e.g.*, workers and petty offiicials, have been settled in rural centers, thus extending urban influence still further. By these means a double network of individuals more or less shaped by the conditions of urban life is established. Contacts and relations between urban centers and rural districts can vary markedly, however. The area affected by the prestige of political leaders thus may be more or less extensive. The forms of activity and organization created in the city generally can be transplanted to rural sectors only in their rudimentary forms.

In Senegal, historical factors account for the sharp division between city and countryside. In the old coastal cities, a separatistic history and a particular juridical status have contributed to their marginal position in Senegalese life. The consequences of the separation between the former "citizens" of "the four communes" and the former "subjects" of the interior[9] have not been entirely wiped out, even in recent years.

From the foregoing points of view, Senegalese urban political life can be oriented in summary fashion to the general problems of urban political life. A series of particular traits in the Senegalese situation are first interpreted against the historical background. The subsequent section summarizes the results of investigations conducted in certain Senegalese [114] centers in 1953-1955, during a period of transition between two major phases in the development of political life.[10]

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[8] These facts were studied by M. Hunter, *Reaction to Conquest*, London, 1936, among others.
[9] *Cf., infra.*, summary historical comments regarding the development of citizenship in the oldest Senegalese settlements.
[10] After 1956, changes occurred more rapidly. There were profound transformations in the orientations of political parties, in the organization of unions, etc. These transformations acquired greater significance in the new legislative and constitutional frameworks instituted in 1957 and subsequently.
[11] These had an organization patterned after that of French communes, even though the conditions under which they operated were not always comparable. It was not until 1956, 75 years later, that communes were established in territories other than Senegal.
[12] These were all characterized by the fact that their mayor was a representative of the French colonial administration. There were various types, according to whether the city council was entirely appointed, or partially or entirely elected. Between the two wars they expanded rapidly outside Senegal.

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369 633 175 [162] [439] Louis stagnated[14] and Gorée declined, losing people at the expense of Dakar and Rufisque; Rufisque grew rapidly, as the port for the ground-nut. Dakar entered a period of prosperity at the turn of the century.[15] During the late 19th century the composition of the population already was beginning to change fairly rapidly, especially in the expanding centers, but the old core of urban population continued to hold a dominant place, not only in urban life but also in the colony of Senegal as a whole, whose constitution had come into effect. The people of St. Louis most notably served as essential instruments of the colonization effort.

This dominance was expressed very clearly in the political realm. The coastal cities, in contrast to the interior cities and rural areas, had been introduced to the structure and organization through which modern political life is conducted long before the reforms of 1946. Political activity of the modern type was first limited to the European settlers but was [563] soon extended to the mixed-blood element and then to the Negro population. Beginning in the late 18th century, St. Louis had a mayor, always a mixed-blood, who served as intermediary between the governor and the populace. In 1789 the [668] colony participated in metropolitan political activities, sending to the States-General a petition of grievances that demanded commercial freedom — *i.e.*, abolition of the Company monopoly — and the end of slavery. A satisfactory agreement was reached among employees of the Company, European businessmen, and mixed-blood businessmen, but it was never brought to fruition; a period of disorder set in and persisted until the rebirth of the colony in 1815.

[641] In 1833 French citizenship was conferred upon all free inhabitants of St. Louis and Gorée by royal decree. Citizenship was extended to all inhabitants of

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369 in some years. Since the beginning of the
633 20th century, however, urban citizens
175 have taken an increasingly lively interest
[666] in political matters.[18]

In this restricted political system the
563 relative importance of the roles played by
668 different ethnic groupings and different cities varied continuously. Ethnic dominance, first held by the old European families, passed gradually to mixed-blood society, which came into being in the 18th century and rapidly acquired wealth, education, and influence. By the mid-19th century mixed-bloods made up the majority of the westernized population. But the entry of the emancipated slaves,
[166] the first sizable migration toward the cities, quickly reduced the mixed-bloods to a minority. In 1900 they numbered
[162] less than 5,000 in the four communes together, though for several decades their economic and political influence remained quite disproportionate to their num-
668 bers. Among the cities, St. Louis was
[869] predominant until WW I. At the beginning of the century it practically controlled the deputation to the French legislature and the Council-general — and hence the economic life of the territory. Then Gorée-Dakar came to the fore;[19] in 1914 a citizen of Gorée, Blaise Diagne, was elected deputy, followed by Galandou Diouf and Lebou. These men
[645] were the first elected Senegalese to win broad support at Paris; Diagne himself was appointed a Secretary of State [a subministerial post, equivalent to a U.S. Under-Secretary]. In Senegal, the au-
[642] thority of elected officials — deputies and Councillors-general — increased, and clashes with the civil administration were frequent.[20]

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[16] Which nearly tripled the number of citizens, who henceforth comprised a body that was more heterogeneous but less completely "assimilated."

[17] Translator's note: the *notables* were influential residents appointed to high political offices in the interior by the local representative of French government.

[18] Especially after 1914, when there appeared a particularly dynamic personnage, Blaise Diagne, whose popularity was widespread.

[19] Dakar absorbed Gorée in 1929. The latter was reestablished as a separate commune in 1936.

[20] At first — at the end of the 19th century — these were conflicts between the merchants, upholding the interests of their agencies, and the civil administration, then engaged in an expansionist policy in West Africa, whose advantages the former could not see. Not until recent years did these conflicts change very much in character.

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[illegible] 369 633 998 [illegible] 115 [illegible] 411 [illegible] 42 [illegible] 49 [illegible] 66

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668 This political tradition explains why the changes in Senegal after 1946 took a unique coloring, and why Senegal's subsequent political history has been considerably different from that of other French West African territories. The political changes instituted after WW II [633] represented in part a loss of privileged position for the four communes, though they continued to play a dominant role for several years.[21] This was one of the factors that made the period 1946-1956 one of transition.

668 665 One important development was the appearance of well-structured political parties. Pre-war political life had been characterized by clusters of followers assembled about influential leaders, in a framework that somewhat resembled that of a "republic of notables." This pattern was still common in 1946; the nature of parties changed only gradually. On the other hand, political life broadened to include the whole territory. The long-standing predominance enjoyed by the coastal cities persisted for a few years but the weight of their electorate fell rapidly.[22] The emerging ideologies and the newly-founded political organizations were oriented toward the satisfaction of wants quite different from those typical of the old urban populations. But the models and the leaders that the latter had produced retained an influence that greatly exceeded their geographic limits, and in the cities they receded only slowly before the growth of a political life with different roots.

The fact that the post-war institutional developments were not transplanted to virgin soil had two contradictory results. On the one hand, a political party that was merely a branch of a

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668 665 French party — the S.F.I.O.[23] — developed and for several years played a dominant role throughout Senegal. In the other territories parties were more often purely local, and simply allied themselves with the French parties. The S.F.I.O. lost its predominence in Senegal after 1951, but kept it in the four communes — St. Louis and Dakar-Gorée being its chief strongholds; it remained there as [666] the African Socialist Movement.[24] This result, the adoption of assimilationist views, was to a certain degree a characteristic of pre-war political life, but on the other hand it contributed to the leadership of the first party that tried to be at once interterritorial and specifically African: the African Democratic Assembly (R.D.A.). It provided some of the most radical elements in the movement, which received considerable support, especially at Dakar. Several radical leaders were the source of the conflicts that resulted in the split in the R.D.A. that followed the change of orientation after 1950. The R.D.A. was subsequently a rather marginal movement in Senegal. This second result suggests the strength of the relations of a party limited to the numerous elite of the old Senegalese cities with the great European currents of political thought.

[369] [666] But the greatest effect of the diversification of Senegalese political life was felt elsewhere. The appearance and rapid success of the Senegalese Democratic Bloc (B.D.S.) — which stemmed from a division in the S.F.I.O. — were the manifestations, in the political realm, of two essential facts: (1) the important changes that had taken place in the composition of city populations; and (2) the resumption of initiative by the rural populations, who seized the opportunity to express themselves directly, and especi-

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[21] A very significant portion of the present framework emerged from the "four communes."
[22] Until 1957, universal suffrage existed only in the four communes. In the rest of Senegal the franchise, which was very limited in 1946, was extended to more and more people. The organic law of 1956 abolished all restrictions.
[23] Translator's note: French section of the Workingmen's International: the French Socialist Party, attached to the old Second International.
[24] In 1956. The municipal elections of the same year showed clearly the extent of its influence, which was unimportant in the interior cities.

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668 665 369 666 ally to express themselves in opposition to the old cities. The legislative elections of 1951 were typical in this respect. The enlarged rural electorate had numerical control and held the key to success in the elections; a substantial part of the urban masses shared in an effort to drive a breach in the old system of urban domination. In this period the ideological aspects of the political parties were still unimportant. The elections of 1951 were a victorious revolt of the new citizens, urban and rural, against the old citizens of the "four communes."[25] The two candidates of the B.D.S. won. Significantly, one of them represented directly, through the unions, the new forces. The division between the whole of the territory and the cities was thus repeated *within* the cities. A new phase had commenced, one in which politics became more complicated. But the forms that can be termed "traditional" for political life were too deeply embedded within the patterns of urban life to give way at once.

Senegalese Political Life in Transition, 1953-1956

668 665 [114] It was under such conditions that researches were conducted on the forms of political expression in several Senegalese urban centers, chiefly at Dakar-Gorée and at St. Louis — that is, three of the four communes — and also at Thiès, a newer city in the interior close to and under the influence of the Dakar-Gorée-Rufisque aggregate. This last study provided certain comparative materials. This essay discusses only some of the findings of these researches. Three essential facts must be remembered:

(1) The importance retained by certain long-standing patterns. A party de-

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668 signed to be distinctive, and to a degree
665 founded in opposition to these patterns, nevertheless conforms with them, at least for a time, within the "old cities." This is one of the limits of the political system of this period: the deepest political aspirations, which are rapidly gaining strength, can be only partially expressed within a partisan structure.

(2) The central role of certain non-political groupings and organizations[26] in the elaboration of more radical ideologies and in the formation of the most active groups. This must be viewed as a direct function of the preceding condition.

[571] (3) The temporarily marginal status of an important part of the new elites, whose formation had accelerated in the post-war years. At the time of study, a shift of elites was occurring. Youthful elements were vigorously opposed to what was termed the "bourgeoisie of the old cities."[27] This is another indication that the underlying forces still laid outside urban politics; they did not enter them until 1956.

The New Parties

665 After 1946 a series of political parties
369 emerged: the Senegalese branch of the S.F.I.O., the B.D.S., the M.P.S., and the U.D.S.[28] Only the first two received wide support, yet one cannot fail to be impressed by the extent of party membership. Out of a group of 1,200 men interviewed at Dakar, for example, more than half (56 per cent) declared themselves members of a party.[29] The percentage was very high, and of considerable significance. The population involved in this sampling was essentially a stable one, or at least one settled in cities for several years. Other researches justify

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[25] At the time, the civil administration viewed this revolt rather favorably. Of course, it was only one aspect of the politics of the period. Some rather contradictory alliances were formed to oppose the S.F.I.O.

[26] Assuming a limited sense for the word "political," by applying it solely to party organizations.

[27] *Cf.* P. Mercier, "Evolution des élites sénégalaises," *Bull. intl. des Sci. soc.*, VIII (#4, '56). Materials for comparison appear, *mutatis mutandis*, in E.-F. Frazier, *Bourgeoisie noire*, Paris, 1956.

[28] Senegalese Populist Movement and Senegalese Democratic Union.

[29] This involved solely the male population.

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665 striking. The data from Thiès enable one to approach in a much more meaningful way the problem of differentiating between the two large Senegalese parties in terms of their socio-occupational composition. Adherence to the B.D.S. was generally predominant in all categories, but the trend toward this party was greater, on the one hand, among semi-skilled and unskilled workers, and on the other, among higher-ranking office-workers and government employees. At Dakar, where the B.D.S. was at this time in the minority, a comparable trend was apparent: the party was proportionately stronger among semi-skilled workers and intellectuals. But differentiations of this type cannot fail to be blurred in a context such as that described above.

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●668 Therefore the importance of the groups remaining on the edge of party activities was more significant. Two groups merit particular attention. These were, first, the new cadres emerging from higher education; the problems resulting from their emergence are briefly discussed below. Secondly, there was a rather large group of persons less than thirty years old who had at least a primary school education.[45] The criticisms that the latter expressed against the established political system were often very harsh (against the city government, against the cadres of the two parties, etc.). Some had made several attempts to gain admittance to the existing parties, or into youth groups affiliated with the parties. They found themselves in weakly-structured, short-lived groups with no specific political function, but in which political problems were approached in a generally nonconformist manner. Otherwise they devoted their energies to organized nonpolitical groupings.

The importance of some of these nonpolitical groupings must now be examined. To a large degree they offered, more

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665 than the relatively inflexible political par-
● 668 ties, adequate frameworks for expressing anti-colonial demands and for creating activists.

Religious Organizations

665 As distinct from many other parts of
668 Sub-Sahara Africa, organizations of a
793 religious character play only a very limited part here. We have already seen how the "traditional" political parties entered into the activities of some religious groups and attempted to make them recruiting bases for their clientele. The more limited movements alone provided certain means, chiefly indirect, for expressing extremist political demands. This was the case, for example, of a grouping founded by Moslem students at Dakar. However, they received very little support.[46]

Cultural Associations and Youth Movements

668 Cultural associations and youth move-
575 ments have had a more important role in this area. Some of them have contributed to the formation of strong political cadres. In general, the cultural associations have had a rather precarious existence; their activities in some cases have ceased. Their efforts to win the support of the masses by undertaking an educational role — for instance, by means of the theater — have often been disappointing. Finally, they often have had a
[369] ambiguous nature. Thus, in a city such as Dakar, founded by highly "assimilated" elements, they have experienced some difficulty in contributing to the development of modernized African culture. But they are not devoid of concern for political organization in a very general sense, removed from party orientation. This was shown with regard to three of the

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[45] Often, youths whose studies had been interrupted. It was difficult for them to achieve occupational stability.

[46] Its policies called for a renovation of Islam, so that it came more or less directly into opposition with the great Brotherhoods, whose religious formalism was rather marked; the latter retained a generally dominant influence.

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668 most vigorous associations, by an investi-
575 gation of the topics discussed by the study groups that they created, and of the content of the discussion.[47] By considering such questions as teaching and the language for teaching, the organization of local communities, economic development, interracial marriages, etc., their study of the political problems resulting from the colonial situation had wide influence.

As for the Youth Council of Senegal,
[369] which comprised the majority of youth associations and was organized primarily in the cities, the orientation of its activity was even clearer. By the nature of its conflicts with the civil administration, by the content of its demands in behalf of youth, by the topics related to the future of youth whose study it was undertaking, it disclosed a "nationalist" potential of some vigor.

It is essential to note the possible role of associations founded on ethnic or territorial bases, in particular those inspired by youths. Centers for contact with territories other than Senegal, they spread
[665] the foreign political influence of the parties predominating within them. This seemed to be the case, for instance, of the grouping of Senegalese youths with relation to the R.D.A. However, these associations were never directly linked with a given partisan organization. The political role that they might temporarily play was very flexible and therefore somewhat indeterminate.

Labor Unions

467 Labor unions should receive especial attention. The union movement in French West Africa is numerically one of the most important, and among the most active, in all of sub-Sahara Africa.
[665] Like the political parties, it took form only in the immediate post-war period.
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467 In 1954 it had a membership about 100,-
000, or a little less than one-third of all
wage-earners. The unions have reached
[369] their greatest development in Senegal,
especially in the large cities. In 1954
this territory contained more than half
the union members in French West
Africa, more than a third of all Sene-
galese wage-earners. Dakar has a central
role in this field. It is the headquarters
for the largest unions, which were once
affiliated with French federations but
are now autonomous. Dakar also pos-
sesses a very active "Labor Exchange."
By itself it contains more than two-fifths
of the union members in Senegal.

467 To some extent the significance of
668 the unions is more than occupational
and economic. The degree to which they
[667] complete the political machinery of the
[665] city is suggested by a comparison of the
percentages of party memberships with
the percentages of union memberships.
Of 1,200 persons interrogated during the
Dakar survey noted above, about one-
half (52 per cent) stated they were
union members. The potential ambiguity
of such statements was suggested above
in connection with political parties.[48]
However, an analysis of the respondents
by socio-occupational categories gave
meaningful results. The average rate of
union membership was surpassed by
lower-ranking office-workers and govern-
ment employees, higher-ranking office-
workers and government employees, and
professional people; it was equalled by
semi-skilled workers. With the exception
[665] of the first, these are precisely the cate-
gories whose rates of party membership
were lowest. On the other hand, partici-
pation in union activity was distinctly
more important among the categories
comprising the intellectual elements than

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[47] We acknowledge our indebtedness to the cultural associations for inviting us to participate in their study groups.

[48] Respondents claiming membership in a union often were behind in the payment of their dues, or only heeded the directives of the union without having joined it. Hence the number of union members, so far as it can be estimated from the general survey, is much higher than that given by the unions themselves. The deviations shown for the different categories are more marked than the raw figures of the general survey indicate; the categories with the highest percentages of union members were those in which the exactness of the responses was the greatest, as later samplings emphasized.

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467 668 [498] among the semi-skilled workers. The situation was reversed at Thiès, but because of the large Dakar-Niger Railroad shops there, this city is an exceptional case. The traits found at Dakar, by contrast, proved characteristic of unionism in French West Africa. The overall figures, obtained from official sources based on statements by unions, indicated clearly that manual occupations were the least unionized. Out of the 100,000 union members in French West Africa in [649] 1954, more than half were either government officials or government employees. The rate of unionization in the governmental sector was nearly double that in the non-governmental sector. Finally, in the two sectors together, semi-skilled workers comprised only a little more than a fourth of all union members. Furthermore, results of the studies at Dakar and Thiès suggest that union membership and level of schooling correlate rather closely; this was far from the [665] case with respect to party membership, at least at Dakar. To what degree did unionism offer educated individuals a means of expression that, in the period studied, parties did not offer them? Educated persons, especially youths, were more susceptible to extremist anti-colonial aspirations. And to what degree could union action present itself more clearly as a trial postponement for the existing order than action within the framework of parties?

The particular traits of union struggle markedly demonstrate the fundamental conflicts of the colonial situation. One cannot accurately speak of the "politization" of unions, in the sense many government officials give this term. The [665] limited activities of parties and the very conditions of unionism in a colonial situation have given unionism a marked political coloring.

(1) Interviews of militant unionists,

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467 focussing on some of their asserted poli-
668 cies, revealed that the union struggle was regarded as directed essentially against the government. This must be interpreted not only with regard to the general traits of the colonial system but also in relation to the commanding role that the government played in labor. It was first of all the principal employer: in a city [369] such as Dakar, a little more than a third of the wage-earners were dependent upon it. It was responsible for setting the [465] minimum wage, and it has happened that owing to budgetary considerations and general policy it established a lower figure than non-governmental employers might have adopted. Finally, during the period [466] in question, a central problem was that of enforcing the Code of Overseas Labor, enacted by Parliament in 1952. The civil administration was responsible for its enforcement, and the strikes of 1953 were [468] designed to bring pressure on the administration so as to obtain a "fair enforcement" of its provisions. In the interviews mentioned above, conflicts with employers were scarcely mentioned as such. Employers were identified with the civil administration; the terms "civil administration" and "colonialism" seemed almost interchangeable. The adversary of the unions being essentially the civil administration — and a "colonial civil administration" — their action inevitably assumed political significance, broadly defined.[49]

467 (2) In the field of union activities
668 the hostility between the European com-
563 ponent and the African component of the urban population showed itself most vividly. This stemmed not merely from the fact that the civil administration and the employers represented the power of the "whites." It was also noteworthy that European workers, employees, and [468] officials almost invariably formed separate unions, with goals sharply opposed to

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[9] This struggle against the civil administration was not confined to local matters. It was affected by events at Paris, both administrative and parliamentary. The use of political precedents seems very clear here. They sometimes brought success, as was the case in the enforcement of the provisions of the Labor Code regarding the hours of work.

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467 468 668 563 those of the African unions.[50] The acute crises produced by certain important strikes gave forceful expression to this rift. The African unions, despite their ideological differences, despite the personal rivalries that brought their leaders into opposition, often engaged in combined and coordinated activities. By contrast, the strikes of the African workers and those of the European workers scarcely ever coincided, though the latter might break out as a response to the [465] former in an effort to maintain the hierarchy of salary scales. As demonstrations of African unity against the civil [578] administration and against European controls in general, strikes were the only occasion in which the underlying tension characterizing the city appeared distinctly and in a generalized fashion. It was because they expressed this tension that their impact and the emotional response to them were so important.

467 468 668 (3) This was also the principal cause of their ultimate success. During such conflicts, demands were expressed that were far more extreme than those made by the parties. Thus, in the strikes of 1953, the union press and the union leaders evoked the possibility that African "loyalism" would be suspended and that the bonds between France and the Overseas Territories would be changed; the question of independence was openly and threateningly discussed. Union activities assumed a certain nationalistic coloring that the parties at that time disregarded. Behind every limited demand regarding salaries or the regulation of working conditions lay the fundamental anti-colonial demand; it was this demand that gave weight to the mass demonstrations and that carried the day.[51] It must be further noted that during this period major external ideological elements entered the contest, especially through the unions. An important number of their activists had studied techniques of organization,

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467 both in France and in other countries. Participation in international congresses
668 put them in contact with the ideological currents of the world. A study of the union press was very revealing in this regard.

[665] To the masses, unions proposed goals that were, in the period under consideration, far different from those of the political parties. Unions were in many ways more systematic and more vigorous. They were much less apt to make
[563] differentiations along ethnic, religious, or other lines. The unity of action that they practiced banned their assimilating such hostilities and conflicts, whose meaning was foreign to them. These hostilities yielded before the fundamental hostility brought out by union action. The near-unanimity with which the directives of the union have been followed is very
[571] significant. For the elites, on the other hand, unions offered, in an era in which the forms and matrices of customary political expression appeared too narrow, a wider and more adequate field of action. Unionism supplied the most accessible agencies for sharing in power of the modern sort. The intellectual elites furnished
[571] the substance of the union framework and played a dominant role on their executive committees.[52] Located at the very center of situations of tension and conflict, they found in union activities the most effective way of asserting modern views and of surmounting the limits barring their advancement in the political and occupational fields.

Developments Since 1956

668 Such were the chief aspects, in a period
369 of transition, of the political life of the large Senegalese urban centers. In the subsequent four years, great changes have occurred. Senegalese political individuality — considerably modified by that of the "old cities" — has remained clear, but it has in great part shifted to

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8: Mercier E-5 (ca. 1955) 1960 MS37 Senegal MS37

[50] *Cf.* P. Mercier, "Aspects des problemes de stratification sociale," *Cahiers intl. de Soc.* XVIII, 1954.
[51] A scrutiny of union publications in 1953 made this evident.
[52] In a very broad sense; their composition was very heterogeneous and drawn from various strata.

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other fields.

668 369 In the "old cities," changes have taken place that were already evident when the investigations noted above were being conducted. The importance of these facts must be emphasized:

(1) The separation between the cities and the countryside, and more particularly between the old cities and the rest of the territory, is becoming less sharp. This fact has already been pointed out in connection with recent demographic developments and the growth of the B.D.S. There are other indications. The 591 668 369 intellectual elites have more diversified origins; though the oldest nuclei of urban population remain important in their composition, they are steadily decreasing in size. The bonds among the different sections of the territory are tightening. On the other hand, the old elites are becoming active outside city boundaries, and give a place in their considerations to the problems of rural modernization and evolution. Certain projects established by the youth associations and the unions have contributed to this orientation.

(2) These facts are connected with a shift in generations that has extensive effects. The attitude of youthful elites has been different; they feel themselves competent to assume broader responsibilities.[58] At the same time they are diverging more or less impetuously from the paths of "assimilation," and are striving to rediscover and revive specifically African values. An effort to prove themselves individually by integrating themselves into the existing system is being succeeded by an effort to prove themselves as representatives and guides for a host that must be freed from this system. This is a trend toward nationalism, in the widest sense of the term.

668 369 563 (3) In the coastal cities, the growing strength of racial tensions since the last war cannot fail to encourage such a

668 change. The vast increase in the number of Europeans, their greater occupational diversification, the much stronger reaction to the facts of discrimination, and multiplication of competitive situations — occupational or otherwise — are the most obvious phases of this major phenomenon.[54]

As these factors have come into full operation, a new phase of political life has opened. These are its principal traits:

668 (1) From 1956 on, in unions and in politics, secessions from the original French bodies — confederations or parties — have multiplied. Previous remarks indicated the development of this process among unions. After some delay it affected the S.F.I.O. itself, which was transformed, not without difficulties, into the African Socialist Movement. The assimilationist tradition declined, or at least was no longer proclaimed openly. After the parties became autonomous, the distinction between direct and indirect forms of political expression began to disappear. Extremist demands of a nationalistic character found expression within the parties, and worked effectively there after 1957 (at the time when the new "organic law" authorized the first Senegalese government).

(2) To a certain degree, the very old Senegalese political tradition once more became a driving force. At the same time the marginal elements, whose existence was particularly marked among intellectuals, entered into real politics, chiefly within the framework of the B.D.S. They comprised the left wing of the new Senegalese Populist Bloc (B.P.S.), which stemmed from the B.D.S., and shared in the creation of the African Convention, which is striving to extend outside Senegal the strictly autonomous orientations of the B.D.S. They tried to organize the B.D.S. as a

8: Mercier E-5 (ca. 1955) 1960 MS37 Senegal MS37

[53] *Cf.* P. Mercier, "Evolution des élites sénégalaises," *Bull. intl. des Sci. soc.*, VIII (#4, '56).
[54] *Cf.* P. Mercier, "Le groupement européen de Dakar," *Cahiers intl. de Soc.*, XIX, 1955.

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8:Mercier E-5 (ca. 1955) 1960
MS37 Senegal MS37

668 665 mass-party, but in patterns very different from those prevailing in the "old cities." Finally, their influence has been decisive in attempts to regroup the Senegalese parties, "disregarding personal and doctrinal differences." It has been a question of wiping out the fundamental hostility that typified post-war Senegalese political life, which — as we have seen — had more than a purely political significance. This effort led, not without difficulties, to the creation of the African Regroupment Party (P.R.A.). The former rivalries were still evident, though in a diminished and less forceful manner, during 1958-1959. The youthful elements of the B.P.S. at first helped provide the latter with leadership of the other territorial parties. It was they who, at the Congress of Cotonou, introduced the first outspoken assertion by the P.R.A. in favor of independence.[55]

[369] (3) However, the influence of the political tradition of the old cities has not been entirely discarded. Added to that of the conservative religious leaders, it helps account for a return to a moderate stand on the part of Senegal. The campaign for the referendum of 1958 showed

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668 this clearly; it was under this two-fold
665 pressure that the B.P.S. took a position in favor of "yes." It likewise accounts for the less extreme attitudes often taken by leaders within the new Mali Federation.[56] However, this influence of tradition is not sufficient to block new trends. It is significant that in the legislative
[666] elections of March, 1959, the Senegalese Solidarity Party (P.S.S.), a combination of conservative city and rural elements, was as thoroughly defeated at St. Louis, where victory seemed probable, as in the rural districts. Again, it should be noted that the youthful elements that entered the B.P.S. in 1956 have in part left the new Senegalese Progressive Union (U.P.S.), an offshoot of the latter party after the regrouping noted above. By founding the African-Senegalese Regroupment Party (P.R.A.-S.), they have hoped to express their disappointment with a party insufficiently radical, insufficiently organized in structure, and containing too many aspects of the "traditional" political life of the old cities.

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8: Mercier E-5 (ca. 1955) 1960 MS37 Senegal MS37

[55] Some months before there was established an African Independence Party, whose support remains very limited. [Cotonou is the capital of Dahomey.]

[56] Translator's note: the Mali Federation is the new state formed by the union of Senegal with the Sudanese Republic.

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